
Vanessa Zapata

Law Student (L1) | Juris Doctor Candidate

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Academic Qualifications

Juris Doctor Candidate
University of Illinois Chicago School of Law
Expected Graduation: May 2028
Current GPA: 2.64 / 4.00

Bachelor of Arts in Applied Arts
Concentration in Criminology; Pre-Law Coursework
University of Illinois Chicago
Chicago, IL May 2022
GPA: 3.25 / 4.00

Associate in Applied Science, Criminal Justice
Northwestern College
Graduated: August 2015
Honors, GPA: 3.67 / 4.00

Paralegal Certificate ABA Approved
Northwestern College
Chicago, IL March 2016
Honors, GPA: 3.63 / 4.00

Certifications

University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign
Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standard Board
Basic Law Enforcement Certificate March 30, 2017

Membership

Northwestern College, American Criminal Justice Association
Vice President: ACJA-ZSA
August 2014 – September 2015

Work History

Self Employed, Faithful Law Consultants, LLC

Remote | December 2023 to August 2025

- Provided immigration document preparation assistance for individuals and families.
- Completed certified Spanish-English translations of supporting documents.
- Oversaw case coordination and client communication in a remote setting.

Immigration Paralegal, Sverdloff Law Group P.C.

120 S. State Street Chicago, IL | February 2023 to June 2024

- Prepared USCIS applications, including naturalization, asylum applications, adjustment of status, green cards, and employment authorization filings.
 - Drafted correspondence, supporting documents, and application exhibits; maintained and updated standardized immigration questionnaires.
 - Responded to Requests for Evidence (RFEs) and any other time-sensitive court-related matters.
 - Compiled complete immigration application packets for attorney review and submission to USCIS or designated immigration courts.
 - Maintained prompt communication with clients regarding time-sensitive immigration matters, including filings, RFEs, and court-related deadlines.
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Paralegal, Gottreich Grace & Thompson

311 W. Superior St., Chicago, IL | September 2019 – June 2021

- Prepared and drafted motions, pleadings, and other legal documents as assigned in criminal defense and personal injury matters.
- Managed attorney calendars using Google and Outlook, including scheduling police officer statement interviews, court dates, and client appointments.
- Communicated with State's Attorneys' Offices, clerks, and law enforcement agencies to coordinate court appearances and case-related matters.
- Conducted client intake interviews for personal injury cases; created and maintained client files and requested medical records and billing documentation.
- Translated legal audio and documents from English to Spanish; transcribed video and audio recordings for case preparation.
- Requested and tracked FOIA responses, police reports, crash reports, and other investigative records from law enforcement agencies.
- Prepared detailed billing invoices for the firm's primary client, the Chicago Police – Fraternal Order of Police (FOP).
- Supported daily office operations through administrative and case management responsibilities to ensure efficient firm operations.

Paralegal (Contract Assignment – Robert Half Legal)**Schoenberg Finkel Newman & Rosenberg, LLC**

300 S Wacker Dr 15th FL, Chicago, IL 60606 | May 2019 to September 2019

- Provided paralegal and administrative support to multiple attorneys in real estate tax and corporate matters.
- Created and maintained real estate tax files on Appeal Track legal software.
- Managed and updated real estate client spreadsheets to ensure accuracy and timely filings.
- Prepared, scanned, uploaded, emailed, and mailed client billing statements and supporting documents.
- Organized, prepared, and reviewed corporate and client files.
- Transcribed attorney recordings and drafted memoranda and correspondence letters for attorney review and issuance.

Paralegal, CMR Law Group

656 W. Randolph St. Ste 5W Chicago, IL 60661 | February 2015 to October 2018

- Drafted letters of support, cover letters, and correspondence for immigration-related applications.
- Prepared and compiled USCIS immigration forms, including G-28, I-129, I-129H, I-129HDC, I-90, I-485, and related filings.
- Completed Labor Condition Applications (LCAs) and H-1B immigration packets for attorney review.
- Assisted with naturalization applications and green card renewals.
- Managed complex client files, tracked application status, and compiled confidential supporting documentation.
- Prepared outgoing correspondence and maintained organized client files through administrative and document management support.

Police Officer, Phoenix Police Department

629 E. 151st St. Phoenix, IL 60426 | January 2018 to October 2019

- Patrolled assigned areas and responded to a wide range of 911 calls, effectively assessing situations and communicating with victims, offenders, and witnesses.
 - Conducted investigations, identified legal issues, and exercised sound judgment in crisis and high-stress situations.
 - Performed follow-up interviews and communications with complainants and members of the public.
 - Prepared detailed incident and arrest reports in compliance with departmental and legal standards.
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- Executed arrests and completed required documentation and booking procedures when necessary.

Patrol Officer, Harvey Police Department

15301 S. Dixie Hwy. Harvey, IL 60426 | January 2017 to December 2017

- Responded to 911 calls involving domestic battery, theft, DUI, armed robberies, home invasions, assaults, medical emergencies, and other serious incidents.
- Prepared and submitted legal documents and comprehensive arrest and incident reports.
- Worked independently and collaboratively with fellow officers to assist in criminal investigations and scene management.
- Conducted LEADS inquiries during traffic stops, reviewed criminal history information, and issued citations for moving violations and parking offenses.

**Community
Involvement &
Athletics**

Marathon Runner – Chicago Marathon (2024)

Fundraised in support of The Network Advocating Against Domestic Violence
("Run Domestic Violence Out of Town")

Community Advocacy & Marriage Ministry Leader

Casa de Gracia, South Holland, IL

Member: October 2018 – Present

Marriage Ministry Leader: October 2022 – Present

Skills

Research Ability, Written and Verbal Communication, Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, Computer Literacy, Outlook, Multitasking, Attention to Detail, Organization, Leadership, Adaptable, Empathetic, Teamwork, Bilingual (Spanish)
